

# CATHOLIC THEATRE

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## "Intuition" and Tyrone Guthrie

by C. P. CROWLEY, C.S.B., Ph.D.

The sleepy little Canadian town of Stratford, Ontario, is the kind of town that Tom Sawyer would have felt at home in. But for the last three years it has been the summer home of a startling Shakespearean Festival that has drawn enthusiastic spectators from every province and state on the continent. The delighted response of the audiences has been echoed by the acclaim of leading critics. Brooks Atkinson slapped at the Stratford Festival in Connecticut recently by advising them to learn a lesson from Ontario where Shakespeare was being given vigorous flesh-and-blood treatment. The Ontario experiment has been absolute magic for Canadians, a unique experience which may spoil us for life in terms of looking at other productions of the Bard.

From the beginning I have been impressed by the fact that the Director of the Festival, Tyrone Guthrie, has done wonders with young Canadian actors, many of whom learned their acting rudiments in college dramatic clubs, not in drama schools. We have few university drama departments in Can-

ada. As an amateur director I have wondered how the six-foot-four Irishman accomplishes such marvellous things with relatively unknown actors. When they were mentioned three years ago none of us were impressed. There were a few radio names, some Little Theatre personalities, but if it hadn't been for the magic names of Alex Guinness and Irene Worth, and then the glamour of James Mason, I doubt if many of us would have made the trip to see Shakespeare produced in a hastily erected tent in an out-of-the way town. We went to Stratford hoping that the Canadian ensemble wouldn't let down the imports from England and Hollywood, and then we were overwhelmed by the sweep and rapidity of the action on the simple apron stage, the rich detailed work of the ensemble, and the sudden surprising bits of character delineation in the minor roles. We began to be uneasily conscious that some of the young Canadians were sometimes more impressive than the visitors. We didn't want to believe it—a prophet is without honour. What had happened? What had Guthrie done to our young actors? As a director of a college group I wondered whether I could learn something of the secret.

I had read some of Guthrie's articles where he mentioned "intuition," and once, he said that "all the best ideas in art just arrive, and it is absolutely no good concentrating on them and hoping for the best. The great thing to do is to relax and just trust that the Holy Ghost will arrive and the idea will appear." Guthrie was talking about something that actually happened to him in rehearsal. I noticed that he was always careful to add that no one could rely on it alone: one needed mastery of technique. I could understand that, but it isn't technique that makes it so superb. It is what Tom Patterson, the Stratford resident who first dreamed of the Festival, calls his "inspiration." I remember asking Eric House, who has been in the Festival from the beginning and who played five different roles this summer, what he thought was the secret, and the slight Toronto-born actor shrugged his shoulders and said softly: "I don't know really, except that Guthrie is a genius." Words like "genius," "inspiration," and "intuition"

(Continued on page four)

### FATHER NAGLE IS GUEST SPEAKER

The Reverend Urban Nagle, O.P., playwright, author and lecturer, will be the principal speaker at the annual Communion Breakfast of CARTA on Sunday, November 20, at the Waldorf Astoria in New York.

Father Nagle has long been connected with Catholic Experimental Theatre, the radio, movies and television. He will speak to the more than 1500 members of CARTA—The Catholic Apostolate of Radio, Television, and Advertising—on the influence that Catholics should exercise in the industry.

Under the direction of Reverend T. J. Flynn, the CARTA organization is composed of those who are employed in the broadcasting and television industries, and in the advertising agencies. It was founded in the Spring of 1954, in answer to a desire frequently expressed in the communications industry.

## DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES IN THE DIOCESAN UNITS

QUENTIN QUESNELL, S.J.  
*Secretary, St. Louis Unit CTC*

A school's CTC membership is really only a beginning. Frequent participation in CTC activities is needed to bring that membership to life. The local and diocesan units of CTC especially are the ones who have to provide those activities in well-planned year-round programs of dramatic value and interest. The more CTC members work together this way, the better chance CTC has of accomplishing its purpose.

Experimenting with this type of local activity in St. Louis this past year, we have found two new possibilities in particular that others may want to try. These two have the special advantage of not adding materially to the workloads of already overburdened moderators. They stress instead the possibilities of the CTC student membership. We call them the CTC Student Assembly and the CTC Student Council.

The CTC Student Assembly is a monthly get-together of all student members from all schools in the area. It is something of a huge party featuring CTC dramatics, with a different school acting as host each month. First it features a performance of a one-act play or cutting, with a discussion afterwards. Comments pro and con are encouraged, and the actors and directors—preferably all students—get a chance to explain what they were trying to do and why. The discussions may lead almost anywhere, into the broadest and deepest problems of writing, acting, and directing.

Next we have a short talk or a demonstration of features of club organization, club activities, new acting techniques, or of painting, lighting, or make-up—all prepared and presented by students with special interests in one of these fields. We announce the plays coming up in the near future at member schools, and any other outstanding theatrical events around town; the host school serves refreshments; and the Assembly is over in about two hours.

Do they like it? They talk as if they do. And they keep coming back, in ever increasing numbers, in spite of all the difficulties that arise from Saturday jobs and the host of other typical teen-age interests.

The second item—the CTC Student Council—started simply enough. Some one had to plan the programs for the Assemblies, contact all the schools, and prepare the entertainment and exhibits. Who better than the students themselves? They would know what they wanted and how they wanted it done. So we formed our Student Council, a select body of two representatives from each school, elected by the students themselves for this planning and preparation.

Once the Council existed, it turned out to be the most useful kind of arranging and governing body—under and with the consent of the adult moderators, of course. It has

been a perfect means for local officers to keep in close touch with member schools. It has brought all the schools closer together in purpose and understanding. And for arousing general interest and support for common projects, like the Regional and National Conventions, there has been nothing like it.

A description of all the activities we have been able to carry out through the Student Council and the regular Assemblies would be too long for this one article. They were many and frequent. But next year, with the help of these same two institutions, we hope to extend our activity program further still. In the student members of CTC we have found a reservoir of strength and a treasure-house of fresh ideas and inspiration that bode well for the future of Catholic theatre in America.

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The attractive new St. Genesius medals displayed at the Convention brought dozens of orders from high school students. The first ones will be delivered in early November. Sterling silver medals are \$1.50, gold-filled are \$2.50, and solid gold \$15.00. Place your order as soon as possible so that you too can wear this testimonial of your Faith in the patron of Catholic Theatre.

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## From the President's Desk

Congratulations to Sister Elizabeth Seton, to Sister Honora and to all the contributors to the October CATHOLIC THEATRE for a splendid issue.

May we urge all directors to keep *Cross-Country Circuit* clicking with news of productions? What you are attempting this semester may spur a fellow member to a more ambitious and worthwhile effort.

Many thanks to the prompt and thoughtful members who have already paid their dues. The few who have not remembered will receive a second notice—a memory prod.

The size of the *Welcome Mat* will show you how we are growing with a new member joining each day of October. Let's keep the apostolate of the theatre expanding by being alert to encourage new members.

Be assured of our prayers and our sincere desire for a blessed success in your Fall production.

*Sister Mary Angelita, D.V.M.*

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## FESTIVAL NEWS

### CHICAGO DRAMA FESTIVAL

The Chicago Drama Festival will again be held as in previous years during the Thanksgiving holidays, November 25, 26 and 27, at Loyola Community Theatre. This year, the eleventh, is something of a challenge in that the Festival, financially and production-wise, now stands on its own feet. During previous years it was directed and made possible through Loyola Academy. This year, because of circumstances beyond their control, Loyola was unable to continue this sponsorship but the directors of the Chicago area felt that the Festival, after weathering ten years of continued success, should be able to continue on its own merits. Mr. Gerald Sullivan of St. Mel's High School is serving as chairman of the Board. The program, made up by the twenty-two school-participants, is already under way and everything points to an enthusiastic and beneficial three-day event. Directors and students from out-of-town are invited to attend. Sister Margaret Mary, F.S.P.A., Ashland, Wisconsin, will serve as critic-judge.

\* \* \*

### TWIN CITY PLAY FESTIVAL

Sister M. Charitas C.S.J., Chairman of the North Central Region, announces a Twin City Play Festival to be held at St. Joseph Academy, St. Paul, Minnesota, on November 26. Sister M. Irenaeus, C.S.J., is Hostess for the event. Reverend Francis E. Marlin, St. Ambrose College, Davenport, will serve as Critic Judge.

### GENE LOCKHART STARS ON FAMILY THEATER

Family Theater will broadcast "A DOG'S LIFE" over the Mutual Network on Wednesday, November 16, from 9:30-10:00 M.M., E.S.T. Gene will star and host for the program.

"A DOG'S LIFE" was written and directed for Family Theater by John T. Kelley. The background music was under the direction of Harry Zimmerman.

### APPOINTMENTS . . .

Don J. Waters of St. Joseph's College, Emmitsburg, is area representative for Maryland.

Hugh Fitzgerald, of Loras College, Dubuque, has accepted appointment as area representative of Iowa.

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## "Intuition" and Tyrone Guthrie

(Continued from page one)

are heard repeatedly whenever you talk to actors and stage technicians who have worked with Guthrie, and I think they are admirable in suggesting the mystery that is present in his art. There is mystery, certainly, as there is in the source of every artistic creation.

Guthrie's reference to the Holy Ghost suggests that he is aware of the mystery underlying those of his own intuitions and "hunches" which are truly good: a mystery that is metaphysical in the sense that its source is in God. I'm in no position to make a judgment on Guthrie's personal spiritual life, though I noticed in the dedication ceremonies that took place in the big blue tent this year that he read the psalms and sang the hymns with the sincerity and fervour of a sincerely religious man. Of this aspect of the man I cannot, of course, say more, but I think he has put his finger on a point that many Catholic directors may be forgetting: one may and should pray for the "gift," for the "intuition" that none of us can command at will and of our own. Guthrie has arrived, perhaps unconsciously, at a truth that St. Thomas recognized very early in life.

In practice, however, when admirers of Guthrie speak of his "intuition" they may not be using the term in the precise metaphysical sense that I am using here. Mixed with Guthrie's undoubtedly unique intuitive approach to direction is an element of perceptive receptivity that always accompanies his sudden creative insights. I use the word "accompanies": perhaps I should say "precedes" his creation. It is this receptivity—something which I believe can be imitated to a degree by other directors—of which I wish to speak here. If it cannot be developed at least partially by other directors like ourselves then we might as well go on sluggishly getting plays on the boards adequately so that the young actors in our Catholic schools give all their lines without forgetting them, and people go home liking the play if they are related to the actors and being polite about it if they are not.

I decided this year to talk to some of the young actors and see Guthrie through their eyes. I think, in all, I chatted with over a dozen of them. I met them strolling on the banks of the River, in cigar stores, in the Festival book-exhibit, at the parties given for the Press and the Cast, and one afternoon I spent over two hours with a group of them just prior to the opening performance of *The Merchant of Venice*. As a result of all the comments and discussion a picture gradually formed in my mind. Guthrie, according to the actors who knew him in those long rehearsals, was a director with the traditional mercurial temperament, who nevertheless was always a sympathetic, receptive and sensitive audience. David Gardner, a young graduate of the University of Toronto, who played three roles in the recently completed summer season, summed it up neatly by commenting that the actors in rehearsal played to Guthrie as they would to an audience: "he seems to fill the whole theatre." Gardner pointed out that

C. P. Crowley, C.S.B., is head of the English Department at Assumption College, Windsor, Ontario. His field of concentration covers contemporary fiction, poetry and drama and as a side-line he directs the college drama club—Assumption College Players. Going beyond the confines of the Windsor campus he has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Michigan Summer School at Ann Arbor—in the professional theatre there—adjudicating at Ontario Regis Festivals—and before local theatre clubs.

even the lowliest member in a mob scene felt that he had an important part in it. The court scene in *The Merchant of Venice* is a good example: judge, magnificoes, clerks, servants, all cram the stage, and one gets the effect of a unified movement that is almost choral and ritualistic, yet Gardner, who was in the scene, remarked: "each of us feels that he is a special character that belongs on the stage as an individual entity." Eric House, the Prince of Aragon in the *Merchant*, agreed saying that Guthrie makes the actor feel that he is continually looking at him and appreciating him at the same time. "If you suggest something on the stage, some little personal bit of business, he immediately notices and comments on it no matter where you are on the stage." Gardner added an interesting corroboration: "No matter where you are or what you're doing you suddenly do some little thing because you're given tremendous freedom and as you do it Dr. Guthrie comes suddenly out of nowhere beside you and taps you on the shoulder and says: 'let's enlarge this' to help make the point."

The freedom which Gardner mentions must not be confused with the license let loose by a director who comes unprepared to rehearsal. Guthrie studies his play thoroughly for a long time. He has decided on its theme and the mood which he wishes to create long before he meets his actors, and when he begins any scene he first suggests the atmosphere and sets up the general situation within whose limits the actors feel free to create. Sometimes he'll start a scene off in complete silence with nothing but mime, and the silence and the mime will help project the atmosphere in which the actors will create and react in accordance with the demands of the situation. Ted Follows, the brilliant Lancelot Gobbo of the *Merchant*, was careful to point out to me that the whole method is based on Guthrie's fabulous knowledge of the text: "no matter how original a bit of spectacular business may seem it can always be tracked down to some basic meat in the text." This is very true, even though the casual observer watching Guthrie direct is impressed only by the utter spontaneity of the man. Actually, that spontaneity is the result of his keen sensitivity to the possibilities on the stage. Tom Patterson told me a story illustrating this awareness. Guthrie was rehearsing *Tamburlaine the Great* in England and had come

(Continued on page fifteen)

## what has a watch to do with *theatrical lighting*?

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## BROADWAY IN REVIEW

BY MRS. CHRISTOPHER WYATT

**A DAY BY THE SEA**—Mellow British comedy of a diplomat, a grass widow and an alcoholic doctor in their forties, appraising their lives. Written and acted with finesse by the Cronyns, Dennis King, Hallowell Hobbes and Aline McMahon. At ANTA.

**A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE**—Two plays by Arthur Miller; one is a sharply accented character study set in a warehouse, marred by a bit of lewd blasphemy; the other a breathless drama of stevedores in which a lawyer, acting as chorus, tries (unsuccessfully) to link the story with classic tragedy. Both plays are well acted. At the CORONET.

**DAMN YANKEES**—The Faust story musically rewritten for baseball, but this time Faust returns to his Marguerite, facing down temptation in the alluring form of Gwen Verdon. At the 46TH STREET.

**INHERIT THE WIND**—Melvyn Douglas has now taken over Paul Muni's part of Clarence Darrow in the famous Scopes Trial of 1925. Ed Begley is remarkable in his characterization of William Jennings Bryan. The play is interesting and remarkably well staged. At the NATIONAL.

**THE YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL**—Scott Fitzgerald's stories

of sub-debutante in Chicago of 1914 have been dramatized by Sally Benson. Josephine and her flirtations are very funny comedy for two acts, but her precocious straining for dramatic stimulus leave Josephine at the fall of the curtain a Becky Sharp of sixteen. At the LONGACRE.

**DIARY OF ANNA FRANK**—"No matter what may happen," wrote Anna, "I know that most men are good." Anna died at fifteen, in Belsen, but her Diary has immortalized her father's faith and her own radiant spirit. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hackett with Garson Kanin as director, have let Anna and the seven other Jews who were shut up in an attic in Amsterdam for two years speak for themselves. The result is a masterpiece. Schildkarut is Mr. Frank and Susan Strassberg, Ann. At the COURT.

**TIGER AT THE GATE**—A very fine version of Giraudous' drama by Christopher Fry gives Michael Redgrave splendid opportunity as Hector, shown as the statesmanlike hero who tried to save Troy from war. Helen, the well-bred minx, the conceited Paris, the polished Ulysses, the hulking Ajax, all come very much to life in a great production directed by Harold Clurman. At the PLYMOUTH.

# Cross Country Circuit

## COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

The Rosary College Players will present **THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN** by Sidney Howard on November 11th and 13th at 8:15 P.M. in the Rosary College Auditorium, River Forest, Illinois.

\* \* \*

Marymount College Dramatic Club of Tarrytown, New York, announces the November productions and drama highlights. On November 7th, Mrs. Christopher Wyatt will speak in the Spellman Auditorium on **THEATRE PERSONALITIES**. On November 9th at 8:00 P.M. the Marymount College Faculty will present their eighth annual **FACULTY FROLICS**. The Marymount Dramatic Club, under the direction of Mr. Louis Tanno, will present Arnold Bennett's **MILESTONES** on November 16th. Curtain time is 8:00 P.M. Dr. H. Edward Cain, head of the Department of English at Catholic University, will speak on **SHAKE-SPEARE'S COMEDIES** on November 30th at 8:00 P.M.

\* \* \*

**RUMPELSTILTSKIN** is the November 2nd and 5th offering of Marymount College, Salina, Kansas. Students of drama at Marymount join forces with the school's artists and musicians to form their Fine Arts Club.

\* \* \*

Celebrating its 40th year of theatre activity, Webster College, St. Louis, will open its season with a trio of one acts, November 5th and 6th: **RIDERS TO THE SEA**, **A PHOENIX TOO FREQUENT** and **THE BOOR**.

\* \* \*

**CINDERELLA**, November 8, 9, 10 & 11, will be the 8th annual children's play to be presented by the College of St. Teresa, Kansas City.

\* \* \*

The Raven Theatre Guild of St. Benedict's College, Atchinson, Kansas, plans to begin activities with two one acts from among those written by Gheon and O'Neill. November 15 is the production date for the Guild's **BILLION DOLLAR SAINT** by Natalie White.

\* \* \*

Merry Masquers, drama club of the College of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio, will present three one-acts as the November production. The plays, staged for arena presentation, are **WHITE QUEEN**, **RED QUEEN**, **THURSDAYS—AT HOME**, and **THE TWELVE-POUND LOOK**.

Production dates are November 18 and 20. Sister Elizabeth Seton, O.P., is director.

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The Dramarians of St. Mary College, Xavier, Kansas, will present **OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY** on November 3, 4 and 5.

## COMMUNITY THEATRE

The Catholic Theatre of Rochester will present **THE SAINT OF BLEEKER STREET** by Gian-Carlo Menotti on November 19 and 20 at 8:30 o'clock. The performance will be given at Nazareth College. Mr. Ronald Pedrone is directing.

\* \* \*

The Mobile Theatre Guild's November production is announced as **DIAL M FOR MURDER**, a taut and exciting thriller. It will be presented by the Adult Guild.

\* \* \*

**OUR TOWN** by Thornton Wilder will be presented November 20, 21, and 22 as a joint College and Community production at Benedictine Heights College, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Sister Mary Immaculate, O.S.B. is directing.

## HIGH SCHOOL

Nazareth Academy (LaGrange, Illinois) is ambitiously opening the year's program with a musical **NAUGHTY MARIETTA** in early November. Mrs. A. Huebner is director.

\* \* \*

The Genesian Players of Bishop Hogan High School, Kansas City, Missouri, are going all out this year. Under the direction of Sister Agnes Virginia, C.S.L., they will present **MRS. McTHING** on November 21st.

\* \* \*

**CAINE MUTINY TRIAL** opens the season for the Meldramatic Club of St. Mel's High School, Chicago, on October 15 and 16. Gerald Sullivan directs the presentation.

\* \* \*

Verse Choir of Academy of Our Lady, Longwood, Chicago, will present **MY COUNTRY** by Davenport in commemoration of Armistice Day. Therese Marie Cuny is director.



Students of St. Agnes High School, Kansas City, Kansas, will have an opportunity to show their musical as well as dramatic ability with their forthcoming production of LUTE SONG November 18 and 19.

\* \* \*

A highly successful production of BOY WITH A CART was reported at Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Marinette, Wisconsin, where Sister M. Evangeline, S.S.N.D. is director. The production was arena style. Setting was merely an elevated grass-covered platform with a few bushes and clumps of tall grass. Beethoven's Sixth Symphony (The Pastorale) was used as introductory music and for interludes. "It was most gratifying to find that good literature sells itself when it is given a chance . . . not only to the elite but also to the Main Street audience."

\* \* \*

The Creighton Prep Masquers, Omaha, will launch their dramatic activities this year with John Patrick's THE HASTY HEART on November 20 and 21.

\* \* \*

THE BILLION DOLLAR SAINT will be the November bill of fare at St. Gregory's High School, Shawnee, Oklahoma according to moderator Fr. Vincent Traynor, O.S.B.

\* \* \*

The Belle Masque Society of Casica Hall, Tulsa, Oklahoma, will initiate dramatic activities with two one-acts on November 20: NIGHT FALLS and THE BLUE TEA.

\* \* \*

"The Genesian Players," drama club of St. Joseph's Academy, St. Paul, Minnesota, announce that on November 11, 12, and 13, they will present MURDER IN A NUNNERY. Ambitious as they are a double-cast will be used. The boys from nearby Cretin will take the male roles.

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## CALLING ALL GENESIANS

The advisability of joining a youth unit to the Catholic Theatre Conference which would be composed of Catholic high school and college boys and girls proved its worth last June when the Tenth Biennial Convention of the Conference convened on the campus of Notre Dame University.

Arriving via chartered bus, cars and special electrics, these thousand youths, *Genesians*, fairly flooded the grounds and theatres of the University throughout convention days, demonstrating in a practical way that Catholic drama meant something to them. They were, in fact, completely "sold" on its benefits; they had come to learn, to enjoy, and in later years, they hoped, to follow and carry on in the fashion of the veteran members after the pattern set them at Notre Dame.

Their sincere interest and enthusiastic participation, day after day, seemed to prove, beyond a doubt, the advisability of their admission in the conference as a Youth Unit known as the *Genesians*.

From the opening of the convention to the last flicker of the rosary procession's candles on closing night, conventioners watched these youthful enthusiasts; all were proud of them and one could not but feel that St. Genesius must have smiled, too, on these his namesakes—happy God had given them to him—in this Catholic action through drama wherein St. Genesius himself had won his crown of martyrdom.

\* \* \*

The picture is beautiful, the memory a never-to-be forgotten one. We shall cherish it always. There is, however, at this very moment a need for pause. We must turn our gaze forward to our future interests, and as we reflect we ask ourselves this question: If the '54-'55 Genesian roll-call touched 2,445 enrollment, what may we not hope for in '55-'56?

The Catholic Theatre Conference is, therefore, here and now calling all Unit officers and past members to check on their annual dues (\$1.50); also, it is asking each past member to bring in one new membership and thereby double the present enrollment. No faithful Genesian will hesitate to contribute his or her dues check; it will come back in many ways.

Checks should be mailed in immediately to the Central Office: 801 Main Street, Davenport, Iowa, so that members will receive a copy of the next issue of *Catholic Theatre*.

Do heed this call to begin or to continue to be a Genesian!

Sister M. Charitas, C.S.J.

St. Joseph's Provincial House

St. Paul, Minnesota

# Strictly Teen

## GREETINGS!

Another year ahead! It looks long from this end and we sincerely hope it will be one of rich achievement and success for each of you.

For you are newly registered in the ranks of CTC Student Membership, a warm and sincere welcome. Your awareness of the importance of Catholic Theatre and your interest in playing a part in that work do you credit. We hope that through the years, you will continue to be pleased and proud to say "I'm a member of the Catholic Theatre Conference!" We know you're going to find it an occasion for making many friends and that you will enjoy the news of members across the country.

For you who are renewing membership, we wish we could add a stripe of merit to your membership card. Your faith in the Conference warrants it. Your confidence has been inspiring and your enthusiasm is contagious.

Many of you attended the Notre Dame Convention and are probably still bubbling over with accounts of it. It was a wonderful convention, wasn't it? In retrospect, it's hard to recall what was best. One thing we know . . . we'll never forget it! Perhaps two quotations might be inserted here because they have been repeated by so many and indicate both the educational and the spiritual enrichment felt by all:

"There was so much to see and learn. I never realized that there was so much to this business of 'putting on a play' and that—far from being play-work—it's serious and important business. I'll never forget those three days—they were wonderful!"

"The candlelight procession made me cry. It was so impressive, so beautiful! Seeing all those hundreds of candles weaving a pattern of prayer in honor of our Lady and asking her to bless our work was the most beautiful thing I ever saw. I'll always remember the Notre Dame Convention and especially, that glorious closing!"

"Walking into the church the first morning, I thought I was dreaming when I saw every seat of that large place filled with worshippers. I always thought I was 'a little crazy' in my love of theatre—but here were over a thousand who felt as I did—and we were all asking God to bless that love. It was thrilling!"

The next convention? So many have asked already. We hope the next one for you will be a regional convention so that you may carry your enthusiasm and interest to those who were unable to attend. By the way, advise others that

*Congratulations to the drama students at Providence High School in Chicago. Under the direction of Miss Therese Marie Cuny they have edited the STRICTLY TEEN section of the current issue. Next month, St. Catherine's High School, Racine, Wisconsin will undertake the publication of this column.*

membership in CTC will bring reduced rates at this regional meeting. Now is the time to take out that membership to actually save money in registration later as well as to keep informed and interested each month through your copy of CATHOLIC THEATRE.

As the year opens, let's not just ask St. Genesius to bless our efforts and then sit back and expect a deluge of grace and of genius. Let's get busy ourselves and put to work all those techniques and lessons we learned at Notre Dame. Let's keep that candle of fervour glowing and growing by sparking interest AND ACTIVITY in your area. Catholic Theatre is your theatre—theatre in your school! What are you doing to make it better?

## ATTENTION, TEEN THEATRE REPORTERS . . .

Send your publicity and news items for *December* publication to

Miss Sue Hughes, CTC Teen Theatre Editor  
Saint Catherine High School  
Racine, Wisconsin

All copy must be in the editor's mailbox no later than November 20.

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## Interview with "Miss Rosemary"

BY

JOANNE AKLAITIS  
Providence High School  
Chicago, Illinois

"When I tried for my first play at Providence High School, my mind was made up. I wanted to be an actress." Thus, indicating her ever present love and ambition for the theatre, we were introduced to Rosemary Rapp who conducts WGN-TV's pre-school delightful ROMPER ROOM.

During her senior year she was awarded a Drama scholarship to Clarke College for her portrayal of Charlotte Brontë in MOOR-BORN. She attended Clarke but later transferred to Mundelein where she received her degree. She did extensive work at the Catholic University of America in summer theatre. While teaching, she auditioned for a unique and different type of teaching position. Her interview as successful and ROMPER ROOM had a teacher.

Working with children is not a novel experience for Miss Rapp. She is quite accustomed to some of their surprisingly funny and unusual antics after using Chicago public schools as a testing ground. Every once in a while, though, they surprise her. She laughingly told of an experience on one of the ROMPER ROOM broadcasts. She had been supervising a baking game during which all the children were earnestly moving arms in a wide, circular motion to indicate that they were mixing cake batter. One little boy was being conspicuously different. His arm was shot out straight ahead of him and his thumb was bent in a curious fashion. Wondering why he had assumed this position, Miss Rapp asked him what he was doing. The little boy replied, "I've got a mixmaster;"

Although working with children is not a new experience for Miss Rapp, working before the television camera is. She mentioned the fact that the technique is entirely different than that of the stage. "You don't have to project as much on television." The TV crew were well praised too. "The technical crews know a lot. If they tell me to wear a certain dress, I wear it, because I know they know best." She paused and smilingly stated that she had learned the true value of crew work in high school.

It was while she was at Providence that she first thought of acting as a career. "The Drama teacher at Providence gave me my first encouragement," she said, "There was much to be learned." Some of it came through participation in verse choir; others through the gratifying experience of working with a group. She recalled one instance in particular; she had been given the part in a play alternating with another girl. "I was wretched compared to the other girl. She was so much better than I was." Determined to quit the play, she talked to Miss Cuny who told her that in life she would be confronted often with the problem of meeting those who could do a better job than she could, but that quitting wouldn't solve the problem. "And that's true," she said, "I've already met ever so many people who can do a

better job than I can." We liked her humble attitude toward her position.

The story that no one ever helps you in the theatre is an "old wives' tale," according to Miss Rapp. Her eyes sparkled as she mentioned the many people who had helped and encouraged her.

"Catholic Theatre? M-m-m-m!" Rosemary paused at that, wrinkled her brow and earnestly started to speak about it. "You have to consider two things; first, Catholic support of Catholic theatre; and secondly, an understanding of Catholic Theatre by Catholics. Catholic Theatre is good theatre. It presents the truth—things as they really are. If Catholics better understood the significance and value of Catholic Theatre, they would give it full support."

And how she would advise a young girl to pursue a drama career she stated that first, the girl should get as much experience as possible with the best possible groups. She explained that a girl should go into the theatre if she has either something to give to it or something to get from it. For herself, she said that she went into theatre because she felt she had talent, ambition and love to give to it. In return, the theatre gave impetus to her talent and above all, personal self-satisfaction. Perhaps, that's why both the children and the television critics love "Miss Rosemary."

---

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## Production Sheet

### "ONE FAMILY SINGS"

*(A 2 Act play with music adapted by Sister Francis Borgia, O.S.F., from the book  
"The Story of the Trapp Family Singers" by Maria Trapp)*

*Anna Helen Reuter, Director at Immaculata and Alvernia High Schools in Chicago, needs no formal introduction to members of CTC. Currently a member of the Executive Committee, Miss Reuter has consistently served the interest of CTC in many capacities. For the past two years she assisted Therese Cuny as editor of the high school section of the bulletin; her many administrative services at the Notre Dame Convention made her a familiar and much-sought figure at that meeting; she is the pleasant little woman who fills the orders for the St. Genesius medals; she is a Director whose art and technique is well-recognized in the Conference.*

*Miss Reuter's Production Sheet is so complete that a review of this unusually interesting play seems unnecessary. The Production Notes included in the playbook are most complete and easy to follow. ONE FAMILY SINGS would seem to be a fine challenge for groups whose production problem of numbers is similar to that of Miss Reuter's at Alvernia.*

It's customary at Alvernia High School for the entire senior class of 200 to take part in the play we do each spring. Since Alvernia is a girls' school it means we must use boys from other schools besides these 200. Now a musical would seem to be the answer to a large cast problem; however, as you all know, there are few musicals within the range of young, untrained voices. If the music is simple enough we usually find an inane story with small literary worth. For this reason we have often staged plays with music, pantomime, dance, and singing added. One of our most successful ventures was "One Family Sings." This was adapted from the book "The Story of the Trapp Family Singers." It was adapted in record time, I might add. Sister Francis Borgia, O.S.F., came up with this idea one day in December. After securing permission from Mrs. Trapp, the author of the book, Sister set to work. By January 1 the play was completed. It was in two acts with many scenes, for Mrs. Trapp gave permission for the dramatization only on condition that the play strictly follow the book. The time span of the play was from 1926 to 1947. Having just directed "Skin of Our Teeth," it occurred to me that we could keep the story intact and eliminate many unnecessary scenes by using Thornton Wilder's technique—movie slides. This is what developed: We secured permission from *Life* magazine to use one of its covers. (Some years back they ran a story about the Trapps.) This cover we flashed on the screen with the words, "Life Visits the Trapp Family in Vermont." Then we showed pictures of the family at different pursuits—at rehearsal, at concerts, greeting visitors at their music camp, doing work around the farm. This same technique was used at various intervals in the play to bridge the time gaps and to cover for scene changes. As a result, the action—except for one ten minute intermission—was continuous.

To get back to the opening. We found that suddenly flashing a picture of *Life* magazine on a screen was not a very dramatic beginning for a play. This is what evolved: As the house lights dimmed half way and the stage lights came on, two girls in peasant costume entered the apron of the stage and sang the first line of an Austrian yodel song. This yodel was answered by a group in the back of the auditorium. As the group from the back of the house came down the aisles, other singers came out on the stage. At the conclusion of the song the house dimmed completely, and the girls on stage pulled back the curtain revealing the screen with "Life Visits The Trapp Family in Vermont." After showing the pictures we used a slide with the same design as our program and the words: "And now Alvernia High School dramatizes the life of the Trapp Family with the play, "One Family Sings." As the curtain closed on the screen, the lights came up on the apron left, and we saw the young Mrs. Trapp as she looked in Austria in 1926. She had a suitcase in her hand and had apparently just gotten off a bus near the Villa Trapp where she was engaged as governess. As she walked across the stage (music during all of this) two people passed by. A little girl laughs at her quaint dress and then we hear Mrs. Trapp's (Maria's) thoughts. (A steal from "Strange Interlude" and the movies this, but another technique that enabled Sister Francis Borgia to cover all the necessary territory in the book.) The lights dimmed, and a spot came up on Maria as she looked at her clothes and generally pantomimed what she was thinking. Previously her "thoughts" had been taped and now the audience hears her recorded voice saying, "Oh my goodness, how I look, etc." This same technique was used many times throughout the play. It helped greatly in eliminating scenes and cumbersome dialogue.

By now you're probably wondering where our cast of 200 plus comes into the picture. At the end of the third scene, when Maria accepts the Baron's proposal of marriage, the curtain closes and girls in peasant dress come out on the apron of stage singing a gay German folk tune. They are joined by men in peasant garb and we have a delightful 10 minute interlude of German songs, dances, and pantomimes—in short, a typical Austrian wedding celebration. At the conclusion of this interlude the singers all moved down into the orchestra pit where they sang at different intervals in the play; sometimes with the principals, sometimes to bridge scenes. The orchestra was placed to one side of the pit. This consisted of recorders (the instruments the Trapps themselves

play) flutes, violins, and piano. Many of the songs we used were mentioned in Mrs. Trapp's book, others we found in collections of German Folk Tunes. They are charming, fun to sing and listen to, and, what is most important, not overly difficult for young voices.

For those who couldn't sing but wanted to be in the play, we had many pantomime scenes: on board ship, at the Salzburg Festival, on 42nd and Broadway, at Ellis Island, and in the finale where we used the entire cast.

"One Family Sings" has just been published by Row Peterson, Evanston, Illinois. The music titles as well as the dance and pantomime numbers are contained in the script. The cast is most flexible. Many parts may be doubled or omitted entirely. While we used 250 people at Alvernia, you could do the show with as few as 25 actors plus a small singing chorus.

Costuming this play was quite a problem. Fortunately, a personal friend of the Trapps described their dress in detail. This, together with the expert help of Miss Kaufmann Costume Company, resulted in a wardrobe that was most authentic. The Trapps themselves, when they saw the production at Alvernia, were amazed at the authenticity of the clothes. These costumes, by the way, are described in the script and are available for rental at the Kaufmann Costume Company, Chicago, Illinois.

Don't let the number of scenes in this play scare you away from producing it. The first act has only one setting (which could be done in drapes) and many of the scenes are played against the front curtain on the apron of the stage. You will find complete diagrams and pictures of all the sets in the script. The slides, too, have been made available for rental at a very low fee (\$3.00).

We at Alvernia are grateful to Sister Francis Borgia for having adapted this play for us. We know the lives of the young people who took part in it are richer today for having learned something about a truly remarkable Catholic family. Produce this show—You'll like it!

—Anna Helen Reuter

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When Christmas begins to loom on the horizon each year, it always comes so fast! And the annual problem of "what to give that special teacher, director, friend" annually presents the same perplexities.

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*(Continued on page fourteen)*

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME

By Grace M. Stanistreet, Director, Adelphi College Children's Theatre, Garden City, N. Y.

*Grace M. Stanistreet, Ph.D., Director of the Children's Theatre at Adelphi College, Garden City, Long Island, has, for a long time, observed with genuine personal interest and admiration the work being done by the Catholic Theatre Conference. Miss Stanistreet has directed and developed an unusual program in the creative arts at Adelphi since its inception in 1937. Because Miss Stanistreet is eager to see more work being done in Catholic groups to further the theatre arts in the lives of children, she has been most helpful to Directors seeking advice and guidance in the inauguration of a program of creative dramatics in the elementary schools as well as in the junior and senior high schools.*

*How many activities are there under the name of Children's Theatre?*

*Children's Theatre* has many faces. It is like personality . . . to one group this side appears, to another a completely different side, according to the need, experience or interest. The most usual understanding of the name is of course that of theatre designed for youth. Even in this use of the name there are differences. In America, Theatre for children today includes opera, ballet, drama, music programs so designated because the preparation and presentation are different to some extent from adult theatre. We have such programs generally executed by adult performers, but there are groups whose reason for being is the presentation of programs by children for children. As long as they are not exploited and the preparation of the productions is an educational process, *Children's Theatre* leaders are proud of those.

The term is used in certain places and groups to indicate an activity which may or may not culminate in a performance—places where the word Workshop is implicit in the title of *Children's Theatre*. Theatre is an integration of all forms of the arts, and serves as a focus for class work in music, dance, art, drama, chiefly and most desirably for purposes other than art—that is for child development. *Children's Theatre* does resolve itself into two major aspects, the one—theatre for children, the other—participation by children in dramatic activity, with or without benefit of stage or audience.

Whether children are seeing a play or participating in the activity, good education is its reason for being. All those working in *Children's Theatre* are agreed upon this.

*Are any of these kinds of theatre in conflict?*

There is frequent misunderstanding about the sharp division made between dramatic activity for children and plays presented by children. Not so long ago dramatic experience for children was harmful, artificial and existed only for purposes of exploiting children. The results were purely exhibitionary. Winifred Ward changed this. She recognized there were other needs and purposes that could be satisfied and served through drama. It could be an excellent means of interpreting life to children and an excellent means of helping them to live better lives. To distinguish between dramatic "training," which taught by the imitative method, and education through drama, which called for thinking, for originality, for spontaneous response, she called her way of working—creative dramatics. In dramatic training, performance is the end; in creative dramatics, development of the child is the end, performance of little importance. It is this question of performance that is sometimes confusing to the lay person.

In creative dramatics we are concerned with a process which results in enriched and strengthened personality. This process must be motivated. One of the surest ways to stimulate group interest and activity is through the play. The play, to be completed, must have an audience . . . there must be some kind of performance. To avoid strains, unhappiness, artificialities, the performance may be nothing more than a classroom experience shared. As the group is able, this may be extended to a stage with costumes and props. Still the emphasis is on individual growth. In many classrooms and situations very little is done with performance and the group never sees a stage. Because a group does a play—and does it artistically and effectively with costumes and all the trappings does not mean that this has not been a creative experience for the individual.

### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

As we have said before, the use of art forms with children is for purposes other than art, chiefly those of personal development and communication. Communication is a two way process and closely related to the development of a child. He needs to know he is understood and accepted so that he may be assured that what he has said, drawn, acted, danced is good. Those of us using drama for education know that the time comes when the group must discover how much they have learned through the audience challenge and response.

*(Continued on page sixteen)*

## WELCOME MAT

*(Continued from page twelve)*

Sister Mary Josepha, O.P.

Nativity High School  
5970 McClelland Avenue  
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Sister M. Judine, O.S.F.

St. Benedict's High School  
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Sister Hortense, O.S.F.

Scecina Memorial High School Drama Club  
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## "INTUITION" AND TYRONE GUTHRIE

(Continued from page four)

to a scene where the king pores over a map on the ground. A servant brought in the "map," a copy of the London Times which they were using as a temporary property, and gave it to the king. Suddenly Guthrie clapped his hands and all action stopped. "The map is too small. Get me one that will be large enough for six Nubian slaves to carry." On opening night when the map was brought in it was placed on the floor to one side of the king and with one sharp hand motion was unfurled across the floor at the feet of the king who immediately fell to his knees to study it. It was an effective, colorful bit of business—one of those touches that show the hand of the master.

I suppose an onlooker at the rehearsal would have said: "Now how did he think of that? That's sheer intuition." I'm not so sure that it is *only* sheer intuition. Picture the scene. Guthrie is sitting out front. The stage is wide, and on it the proud royal figure towering over the members of the court in his rage is filled with plans and ambitions as large as the world. Then on comes the "map," small, oblonged shaped, in the hands of an insignificant flunky. The contrast would be noticed immediately by Guthrie. The "map," symbolic of the king's giant spirit and world-wide ambition is dwarfed by the action and the sheer size of the stage. It seems to me that the small insignificant paper and the attenuated manner of its presentation cried out for amplification to the perceptive imagination of Guthrie. It needed size and dramatic style to make it contribute to the scene. Guthrie, sitting back, conscious of the total effect he was seeking, being an audience, watching for contrasts and illogicalities, was struck by the momentary diminishing of mood. I don't think it was intuition only.

A similarly effective and unusual piece of business I noticed in the casket scene in the *Stratford Merchant*. The scenes were built up carefully to achieve a heightened suspense. Ordinarily, in the Aragon scene the traditional business has the Prince finding a scrap of paper in the mouth of the death's head and reading the little verse on it to bring the scene to an abrupt ending. Guthrie developed the whole scene in a slow almost ballet-like movement and prolonged the suspense to the very last word of the verse by having the Prince pull out, not the scrap of paper, but the tongue of the skull to the length of four or five feet as he reads the poem written in one straight line along the elongated member. The slow emergence of the tongue prolonged the tension of the scene making the audience wait almost interminably for the complete line to be read. It helped to give an extra effect to the last line of the familiar verse: "so begone; you are sped." The suggestion of speed in "sped" comes as an unexpected anti-climax, an ironic turn to what has been a tantalizing bit of stage business.

Again, as in the "map" scene of *Tamburlaine*, the at-

mosphere demanded this elaboration for its final finishing touch. The melancholy dead-pan approach of Eric House in the role of Aragon was allowed to make a more sustained impact on the audience who followed the slowly moving tongue with breathless anticipation of the ultimate reaction of the wooden-faced actor when he reached the end of the tape. It is possible, of course, that many playgoers might not like this particular example of Guthrie's originality, but it is there potentially in the text. It helps affirm the central mood of the scene, and adds an extra fillip of humour and an element of surprise. It is the type of direction that made one Canadian writer in a national magazine call him the "star" of the Festival. It is a style of direction that annoys some traditionalists, but it never fails to interest them. I think it is the kind of thing that we amateurs should learn from. It suggests the freer use of our imagination and the willingness to experiment creatively with the potentialities on our own stages.

The tendency of Guthrie's direction is to move *from* the situation on the stage, to get ideas from the actors who are often unconscious of the effects they are suggesting to him. David Gardner described it this way: "Dr. Guthrie is an architect who puts down a corner stone of knowledge of the play and then starts to build with the raw materials which are actors and lines and scenes, and builds a wall, and suddenly sees one actor or group of actors doing something, creating a kind of sun-porch, if you like, on his architecture, and he says: 'yes, let's make this, not only a sunporch, but a patio and a garage out here,' and he builds the building right there, giving you a superstructure on which you can hang your playing of the production."

There is no doubt that some critics feel that Guthrie's original touches occasionally misfire. Sometimes he allows the fun of creation to go too far, so that some minor moment in the play becomes bigger than it should be so that it obtrudes and slows down the development of the main action. I have never felt that this has happened in Stratford, Ontario, but it could very easily be so. However, the type of thing Guthrie is doing is the type of thing that needs more doing in our Catholic College theatres. Usually we err on the side of leanness. Our action is straightforward enough; we follow the play as it is written, but we do not put enough flesh-and-blood characters on the stage. We do not give them enough personal business. We do not see the possibilities of richer action in individual scenes which would give them vividness. Now, mind you, I am assuming preparation, preliminary study of the text, careful rereading of the script to catch all the hints and suggestions in it. Given that careful study I think any amateur director is ready to produce all sorts of spontaneity in the rehearsal hall. If he gives *his* actors and *his* stage and *his* familiarity with the text a chance, if he allows himself to be *aware* of their potentialities, he will be surprised at the growing frequency of his moments of "intuition." It takes patience and some courage, but it makes for more fascinating productions. With prayer it may make for greater productions.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME

(Continued from page thirteen)

### LEADERSHIP

It is not a performance that makes the dramatic activity creative or not creative . . . it is leadership. It is what happened in the preparation of the play or in the classroom activity which determines whether the class experience or the play experiences is valuable to the individual and results tell us whether the process has been good. The performance or the personality rings true, both are free of artifices, apologies, embarrassments, both achieve satisfying communication. Plays by children can be artificial, imitative, studied, exhibitionary. Creative dramatic activity should be, if it is to be worthy of its name, spontaneous, original, natural, but calling an activity creative does not make it so. Creative leadership produces the finest kind of dramatic experience where the major emphasis is on a child's growth, and the effect of the play of minor importance. There is no conflict between creative dramatics and performance by children. They are different aspects of one activity and one is the outgrowth of the other.

There is still another confusion, that between the play which children make up and the formal play with memorized dialogue. We find many people who feel it is only the made up play which can be called creative. If this is so, then we relegate all of acting to the non-creative. There is a value in memorization but again this value may be lost, or recognized and achieved by the leadership. Again, it is what happens in the process that determines the result.

### Defense of the Term

If *Children's Theatre* means so many different things, why not break up these activities and define and catalogue each. Because there is so close a relationship one cannot say where one ends, another begins. The children's activity may stem from the adult performance for children. The activity may result in a play. The ends of all these is the better education and preparation of a child for life. The techniques and aims in good *Children's Theatre* are one because they are all achieved by the creative process, and because the director of the play for children is the classroom teacher of creative dramatics, this teacher becomes the author of a children's play, the amateur actor in *Children's Theatre* becomes a professional actor in *Children's Theatre* . . . and so on. The result—we are all working towards developing healthy, happy, well-adjusted children.

### NEWS NOTES . . .

Sister Mary Angelita, BVM, President of CTC, recently addressed the Catholic Women's League of Davenport. Her topic: "Theatre as Prayer."

*Children's Theatre* has many faces. We can symbolize it by children's faces looking up at a stage—sober with interest, bright with wonder; by children's faces intent and serious as they imagine themselves other persons in other worlds. *Children's Theatre* in its forms is symbolic of a trend in education to dramatize living and learning, to develop stronger, healthier people through its delightful opportunities to see, to feel, to do, to think, with understanding. *Children's Theatre* can and does embrace many means of achieving the ends of education and enjoyment.

*Children's Theatre* activity by any other name would lose some of its magic and some of its charm for children. *Children's Theatre* because of its scope will eventually bring about better performance on the part of actors and audience.

We are unable to identify the nun-director who, in late August, wrote to Miss Cuny requesting help on organizing a Drama Club. We will appreciate it if she or someone who knows her will write to permit us to explain our failure to answer her letter.

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